

## **IPSF STUDENT EXCHANGE PROGRAMME: DISCOVERING INDONESIA**

My preferred country to participate in the Student Exchange Programme was Indonesia. It was very easy for me to decide - who could refuse Indonesia? Superb national attractions: tropical beaches and islands, impressive volcanoes, ancient culture and archeological wonders! And when you arrive, the most impressive wonder is the people. I was absolutely thrilled. We received a warm welcome and everything was prepared for us. Both the professors and the students were dedicated to my exchange experience.

Our main base was the Institute Technology Bandung (ITB), School of Pharmacy. The University prides itself on its' reputation of being one of the country's centre's of excellence in science and technology. ITB was also the place where Indonesia's first president, Sukarno, obtained his degree in civil engineering.

We started our practice at the pharmacology department and our main goal was to find a conclusion on two different tasks. The first was to determinate the acute toxicity and LD<sub>50</sub> of Water Extract of Bawang Kapal Bulbs (a cardiovascular drug) on mice and to determinate the antihypertensive effect of the extract. The substance was injected in the following order by dosage and we studied the toxic effects, level of severity, body weight development, and the macroscopic observation of the pathological organ. For the first time, I was involved in practical work with living animals. I learnt how to work with rats and mice, and how to administer medicines and injections to them. We also had the chance to



complete post mortem surgery as well as learning how to treat and take care of animals.

Thanks to the local SEO, Armiin and her great schedule, we had plenty of time to visit Indonesian natural attractions. Our trip incorporated visiting Bandung, Yogyakarta, Bali Island and Jakarta. We visited Borobudur temple, Uluwatu temple, many beaches and places on Bali (Sanur, Nusa Dua, Jimbaran, Dream Land, Ubud, Uluwatu, Kintamani and Denpasar) and many others. It was an unbelievable experience!

I would like to thank everyone involved in this project for all the effort they made in order to organize our exchange. It was a great experience! I saw and learnt many things. The Student Exchange Programme is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, so don't miss it!

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## **IPSF STUDENT EXCHANGE PROGRAMME: COMPLETING RESEARCH IN PORTUGAL**

My preferred country to participate in the Student Exchange Programme was Portugal. In Portugal, I was not only a tourist; I was also a citizen there. For my Serbian friends and I, it was an unforgettable month. There were also pharmaceutical students from other countries present, who were concurrently completing student exchanges, in addition to other pharmaceutical students from Portuguese medical faculties.

The Local Exchange Officer in Porto was waiting for me at the airport and escorted me to my accommodation. I was placed in a students' dormitory. It was a very good and comfortable facility. There, I met many students (from Croatia, Poland, Spain) and established friendships with them. I had the opportunity to learn about pharmacy in their countries, other cultures and also to share the exchange experience with them.

I undertook my practice at the Biochemistry Department (Faculty of Pharmacy, Porto). I learnt a lot of biochemistry, analytical



techniques, the relationship between vanilloid receptors of rat maternal tissues during a

normal pregnancy and spontaneous foetal-resorption units, which was the topic of my practice. My mentor explained these details to me in great detail and it was very interesting.

Portugal is beautiful country. I was able to visit many amazing gardens, monuments, buildings, beaches and appreciate the wonderful nature - I was at the beach almost every day. I visited Lisbon, Sintra, Guimaraes and I will never forget my trip - I found out something about Portugal, about the people who live there and about their way of life. It is very hard to describe every single day and write all my experiences in that month. I only know that my friends and I did not want to come back home. It was a very good choice to participate in the SEP in Portugal, and I want to recommend participating in SEP to everyone. I am thankful to all the people who helped me in obtaining this excellent experience.

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### **IPSF STUDENT EXCHANGE PROGRAMME: WORKING IN A PHARMACEUTICAL COMPANY IN LATVIA**

Have you ever thought about which fields our education can be useful? As we all know, we develop our skills in the local apothecaries, but have you ever wanted to increase your own potential and awareness and for instance cross the borders of your country? I have done so!

My name is Iva Prokopová and I joined the Student Exchange Programme by completing my exchange in Riga, Latvia.

One is really full of doubts before going to a foreign country and it is difficult to know what to expect. However if anyone asked me I would recommend this experience without hesitation!

I took my praxis in July 2007. My first impression of Riga? Well, it was very rainy and a grey city to me, however there was a girl - Elita, SEO of Latvia, who did her best to shine for us if the sun had hidden itself under the clouds and day after day, Riga became warmer and more friendly, and not only because of better weather.

What really exceeded my expectations was Grindeks - a leading pharmaceutical company in the Baltic States, of which I had a chance to become a member of for three weeks. Grindeks deals with manufacturing and sales of brand products, generic medications and active pharmaceutical ingredients as well as conducting its own research and development of drugs (in so far as that the world uses Mildronate® and Ftorafur®).

My friend Anka (SEP student from Serbia) and I have been a genuine part of everyday activities at the Quality Control Department. We were introduced to a chromatography laboratory and we were welcomed by Juris, Svēta and all the coworkers there in a very friendly and pleasant atmosphere! Moreover, the majority of the staff were young people and as a result we understood each other pretty well. At the end of the placement, we found out that the Czech, Serbian and Russian language are so relative that we did not need to use any foreign language ;) (to explain - people in Latvia are really bilingual because nearly half of them have migrated from Russia. Thus, another advantage was to meet two cultures - Latvian and Russian - in one country)

Within a couple of days, we were able to prepare samples of pharmaceuticals to analyse but we also operated with HPLC equipment, could use programs for assays and impurity analyses, calculated them and wrote reports in Latvian as well! In addition, Juris showed us other departments of Grindeks, so that we

gained insight into all the areas of industrial pharmacy.

However, there was no limit in opportunities to explore in Latvia too! In our spare time, we visited various parts of Latvia and I can say that I experienced the foreign culture and lifestyle completely by my own skin (mainly the everyday rain;)! The Old Riga for me is a symbol of nice secession architecture, soulful streets, flowers in the broadways, weddings in the castles, local appetizing dishes on every corner and cats everywhere. My friends and I also visited the seaside summer festival in Ventspils (a wonderful city full of little tidy streets and parks for children as well as for adults), the sand sculpture festival in Jelgava, various castles in Bauska and Pilsrundale, the Gauja national park with the nice medieval cities of Sigulda and Cesis in its heart. We went hiking, camping, hiding in the caves, walking in the trees on the ropes, swings and ladders, but mostly we went swimming because many different beaches are placed quite close to the centre of Riga. I was also honored to wear a national Latvian dress and ancient jewelry thanks to one friendly fellow countryman.

In conclusion, Latvia is not a huge tourist country but because of IPSF activities and the SEP program I have learned something more about pharmacy there and I have received a great experience which I will never forget! Thank you.

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